

such as cash, checks and other negotiable instruments, government obligations and marketable securities. It also includes all other property or items convertible into cash or having a cash value and held or acquired for the ultimate purpose of distribution to plan participants or beneficiaries. In the case of a plan which has investments, this would include all the investments of the plan even though not in the nature of quick assets, such as land and buildings, mortgages, and securities in closely held corporations. However, in a given case, the question of whether a person was "handling" such "funds or other property" so as to require bonding would depend on whether his relationship to this property was such that there was a risk that he, alone or in connivance with others, could cause a loss of such "funds or other property" through fraud or dishonesty.

§ 2580.412-5 Determining when "funds or other property" belong to a plan.

With respect to any contribution to a plan from any source, including employers, employees or employee organizations, the point at which any given item or amount becomes "funds or other property" of a plan for purposes of the bonding provisions shall be determined as described in this section.

(a) Where the plan administrator is a board of trustees, person or body other than the employer or employee organization establishing the plan, a contribution to the plan from any source shall become "funds or other property" of the plan at the time it is received by the plan administrator. Employee contributions collected by an employer and later turned over to the plan administrator would not become "funds or other property" of the plan until receipt by the plan administrator.

(b) Where the employer or employee organization establishing the plan is itself the plan administrator:

(1) Contributions from employees or other persons who are plan participants would normally become "funds or other property" of the plan at the time they are received by the employer or employee organization, except however that contributions made by withholding from employees' salaries shall not be considered "funds or other prop-

erty" of the plan for purposes of the bonding provisions so long as they are retained in and not segregated in any way from the general assets of the withholding employer or employee organization.

(2) Contributions made to a plan by such employer or employee organization and contributions made by withholdings from employees' salaries would normally become "funds or other property" of the plan if and when they are taken out of the general assets of the employer or employee organization and placed in a special bank account or investment account; or identified on a separate set of books and records; or paid over to a corporate trustee or used to purchase benefits from an insurance carrier or service or other organization; or otherwise segregated, paid out or used for plan purposes, whichever shall occur first. Thus, if a plan is operated by a corporate trustee and no segregation from general assets is made of monies to be turned over to the corporate trustee prior to the actual transmittal of such monies, the contribution represented in the transmission becomes "funds or other property" of the plan at the time of receipt by the corporate trustee. On the other hand, if a special fund is first established from which monies are paid over to the corporate trustee, a given item would become "funds or other property" of the plan at the time it is placed in the special fund. Similarly, if plan benefits are provided through the medium of an insurance carrier or service or other organization and no segregation from general assets of monies used to purchase such benefits is made prior to turning such monies over to the organization contracting to provide benefits, plan funds or other property come into being at the time of receipt of payment for such benefits by the insurance carrier or service or other organization. In such a case, the "funds or other property" of the plan would be represented by the insurance contract or other obligations to pay benefits and would not be normally subject to "handling". Bonding would not be required for any person with respect to the purchase of such benefits directly from general assets nor with respect to

the bare existence of the contract obligation to pay benefits. However, if the particular arrangement were such that monies derived from, or by virtue of, the contract did subsequently flow back to the plan, bonding may be required if such monies returning to the plan are handled by plan administrators, officers or employees. (Further discussion on bonding of insured plans is contained in § 2580.412-6(b)(7)).

§ 2580.412-6 Determining when “funds or other property” are “handled” so as to require bonding.

(a) *General scope of term.* (1) A plan administrator, officer, or employee shall be deemed to be “handling” funds or other property of a plan, so as to require bonding under section 13, whenever his duties or activities with respect to given funds or other property are such that there is a risk that such funds or other property could be lost in the event of fraud or dishonesty on the part of such person, acting either alone or in collusion with others. While ordinarily, those plan administrators, officers and employees who “handle” within the meaning of section 13 will be those persons with duties related to the receipt, safekeeping and disbursement of funds, the scope of the term “handles” and the prohibitions of paragraph (b) of section 13 shall be deemed to encompass any relationship of an administrator, officer or employee with respect to funds or other property which can give rise to a risk of loss through fraud or dishonesty. This shall include relationships such as those which involve access to funds or other property or decisionmaking powers with respect to funds or property which can give rise to such risk of loss.

(2) Section 13 contains no exemptions based on the amount or value of funds or other property “handled”, nor is the determination of the existence of risk of loss based on the amount involved. However, regardless of the amount involved, a given duty or relationship to funds or other property shall not be considered “handling”, and bonding is not required, where it occurs under conditions and circumstances in which the risk that a loss will occur through fraud or dishonesty is negligible. This may be the case where the risk of mis-

handling is precluded by the nature of the funds or other property (e.g., checks, securities or title papers which can not be negotiated by the persons performing duties with respect to them). It may also be the case where significant risk of mishandling in the performance of duties of an essentially clerical character is precluded by fiscal controls.

(b) *General criteria for determining “handling”.* Subject to the application of the basic standard of risk of loss to each situation, general criteria for determining whether there is “handling” so as to require bonding are:

(1) *Physical contact.* Physical contact with cash, checks or similar property generally constitutes “handling”. However, persons who from time to time perform counting, packaging, tabulating, messenger or similar duties of an essentially clerical character involving physical contact with funds or other property would not be “handling” when they perform these duties under conditions and circumstances where risk of loss is negligible because of factors such as close supervision and control or the nature of the property.

(2) *Power to exercise physical contact or control.* Whether or not physical contact actually takes place, the power to secure physical possession of cash, checks or similar property through factors such as access to a safe deposit box or similar depository, access to cash or negotiable assets, powers of custody or safekeeping, power to withdraw funds from a bank or other account generally constitutes “handling”, regardless of whether the person in question has specific duties in these matters and regardless of whether the power or access is authorized.

(3) *Power to transfer to oneself or a third party or to negotiate for value.* With respect to property such as mortgages, title to land and buildings, or securities, while physical contact or the possibility of physical contact may not, of itself, give rise to risk of loss so as to constitute “handling”, a person shall be regarded as “handling” such items where he, through actual or apparent authority, can cause those items to be transferred to himself or to a third party or to be negotiated for value.